

Remarks

In response to the Office Action mailed July 7, 2004, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration based on the above claim amendments and the following remarks. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments and remarks contained herein place the instant application in condition for allowance. At the outset, Applicants and the undersigned express their appreciation to Examiner Zimmerman for the courtesies extended during the telephonic interview of June 16, 2004.

In the Office Action, Claim 17 is objected to because of an informality. Claims 1, 2, 9, 13 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,457,680 to Kamm et al. in view of admitted prior art discussed at the top of page 2 of the instant specification. Claims 3-8, 10-12, 14-16, 18-20 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but are indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants traverse the claim rejections and objections.

In rejecting Claims 1, 2, 9, 13 and 17 the Office Action relies exclusively on art relating to T1 lines and DS0 channels thereof. Applicants note that the claims of the instant application do not require any T1 lines or DS0 channels and encompass other embodiments as well.

The Office Action indicates that Claims 3-8, 10-12, 14-16 and 18-20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicants have herein cancelled objected to Claims 3, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18 and 20 and re-presented those claims in independent form as new, re-presented Claims 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27. Applicants have amended objected to Claim 4 so that Claims 4-8

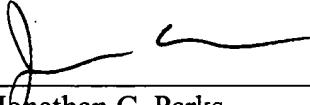
now depend either directly or indirectly from re-presented Claim 21. Applicants have also amended Claims 11, 15 and 19 to depend from re-presented Claims 22, 24 and 26 respectively. Therefore, Applicants submit that Claims 21-26 and 2, 4-8, 11, 15 and 19 that depend therefrom are allowable. *See MPEP § 2143.03 (“If an independent claim is nonobvious under 35 U.S.C. 103, then any claim depending therefrom is nonobvious.”)*

Applicants have herein cancelled Claims 1, 9, 13 and 17, making the rejections of Claims 1, 9, 13 and 17 and the objection to Claim 17 moot. Applicants have also amended Claim 2 so that it depends from re-presented Claim 21. Applicants submit that Claim 2 is allowable by virtue of its dependence from an allowable claim, Claim 21, as well as on its own merits. *See MPEP § 2143.03.*

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance for the pending claims in the present application. If the Examiner is of the opinion that the present application is in condition for disposition other than allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below in order that the Examiner's concerns may be expeditiously addressed.

Respectfully submitted,



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